

# The CP Connection

The Community Partner Newsletter

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Venice Family Clinic shares their experience implementing MHLA's Pharmacy Phase II. Read the interview on Page 2.

Revolution is a process,  
not an event.

~Professor Griff

## Springtime Brings a Reprieve to “ObamaCare”

Happy Spring. I like many of you was tremendously relieved to see the bill that would have repealed many aspects of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) fail in the House of Representatives. This bill would have resulted in many of our former Healthy Way LA patients becoming uninsured again along with thousands of others. I feared we would have to watch our safety net unravel from massive cuts to the Medi-Cal program. We have all worked so hard over the last six years to develop a strong safety net for our low income patients and have seen the benefits of

watching our patients receive and use health insurance for themselves and their families. I was scared to see all this progress come to an end so abruptly. While I am sure the fight to repeal the ACA will continue, I'm relieved to know that it will not be so easy to undo the progress we have made.



Venice Family Clinic's pharmaceutical supply.

Also, I'm pleased as we move into Springtime to watch so many of the clinics that we have brought onto “Pharmacy Phase II” thriving under the new program. In this issue of our newsletter, we highlight **Venice Family Clinic** as one example of a clinic that has done an exceptional job rolling out the pharmacy changes under the leadership of Sharon Ng., Pharm. D. As we move forward with the remainder of our Pharmacy Phase II roll-out during the remainder of the year, we are now asking all remaining clinics to tell us whether they would rather come on in the spring or the fall. Either way we will help you through the transition. If you have questions about Pharmacy Phase II or what it will mean for your clinic, contact me directly at [aviste@dhs.lacounty.gov](mailto:aviste@dhs.lacounty.gov).

I am very happy to walk you through it.

Be well, and enjoy these springtime flowers and the longer days ahead of us.

-Amy Luftig Viste  
Program Director,  
MHLA

### Inside this issue:

- ◆ MHLA Pharmacy Phase II-B Pilot Project Update! See page 2.
- ◆ Interview with Venice Family Clinic's Dr. Sharon Ng, Director of Pharmacy Services. See page 2.

## Done! Pharmacy Phase 2B

On February 1, 2017, MHLA launched the second phase of Pharmacy Phase II roll-out. The MHLA Program Office is pleased that ten new CPs decided to join Phase II and we continue to work with each of them to make this transition as seamless as we can.

Thank you to the following CPs who joined us in February: Altamed Health Services, Arroyo Vista Health Center, Asian Pacific Health Care Venture, Bartz-Altadonna Community Health Center, Korean Health Education, Information and Research (KHEIR), Los Angeles Christian Health Centers, Samuel Dixon Family Health Center, The Achievable Foundation, Venice Family Clinic and VIA Care (formerly Bienvenidos).

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### Pharmacy Phase II: Words of Advice from Venice Family Clinic

Recently, we had the opportunity to talk with Sharon Ng, Pharm. D., Director of Pharmacy Services at Venice Family Clinic about how Venice Family Clinic has such a smooth and seamless roll-out of Pharmacy Phase II at their clinic. Venice has done an excellent job rolling out the Phase II changes and Dr. Ng took the time to give clinics some excellent tips on what to think about and prepare for as you come onto Phase II:

**Venice just came on board MHLA Pharmacy Phase II on February 1, 2017. Why did you choose to participate now?**

I wanted to join in phase one but decided to do the second one so there would be fewer issues or problems.

**Venice Family Clinic has a very high success rate with claims submission. That's great. Tell us why you're so successful submitting payable claims the first time?**

My staff and I all heavily rely on the formulary. After we turn on the computer for the day, we open the formulary. When the provider orders a medication, we check it against the formulary to see if its covered, if there are any restrictions, or limitations.

If it is covered, we process it. If it is not on the formulary, we do not process it and instead we do a prior authorization.

Pharmacy staff knowing the formulary is important so they know when an issue may arise and they do not

process unnecessarily.

**How do you currently submit your pharmacy claims? Has this been a challenge?**

We submit electronically. It was an easy transition for us.

**Do you have any tips you would like to share with other CPs not yet in Phase 2?**

Submit electronically if you can – even when I was a dispensary I processed all meds through the computer system. This allows you to collect data easier.

Make sure the pharmacy staff knows the formulary and restrictions. It is good to educate the providers about the formulary, but pharmacy staff is priority.

**What barriers have you encountered in this process and how did you overcome them?**

Prior authorization process was easier in February but now is a difficult task.

Certain meds that I believe should not require [a prior authorization], does. For example, ferrous sulfate should be allowed either once a day or twice a day but MHLA only allows once a day. I have not overcome this yet...still trying to figure out how to solve this.

For some reason, the prior authorization department likes to call for questions on the prior authorizations. I don't understand why since we do not have this issue for prior authorizations with LA care, Healthnet, Care 1st, or Molina.

**Was the change in the process challenging or different than you expected?**

No, I think it is actually easier except for the prior authorizations.

**What would you say to an agency who might be apprehensive about MHLA Pharmacy Phase II?**

If you have an electronic system in place, it will be easier. If it's paper submission, I would wait.

**Thank you, Sharon! We appreciate your insights into the Pharmacy Phase II project.**

### *The CP Connection*

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